

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 1259

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EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: CI, PFOR, US, SCUL

SUBJECT: ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL

REF: STATE 37446, 43588; SANTIAGO 986, 1218

1. SUMMARY: ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL INTERMEDIARY PHILIPPI AGAIN URGES HE BE GIVEN ADEQUATE TIME TO SEEK SOLUTION FOR SCHOOL PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

2. EVENING FEB 26 (PRIOR RECEIPT STATE 43588), AMBASSADOR ENCOUNTERED ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL "MEDIATOR", JULIO PHILIPPI, AT FONMIN'S DINNER FOR VISITING UN UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL BRADFORD MORSE. PHILIPPI INITIATED "OFF-THE-RECORD" CONVERSATION RE ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL, IN PART OF WHICH FONMIN PARTICIPATED.

3. PHILIPPI SAID HE WAS FAMILIARIZING HIMSELF WITH ALL ASPECTS THIS COMPLICATED CASE. REMARKED HALF-JOKINGLY THAT IT WAS MUCH TOUGHER THAN HIS SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS WITH US COPPER COMPANIES: IN THESE, THE SIGNIFICANT XYFXOGI WERE ECONOMIC, WHILE IN ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL CASE WHOLE RANGE OF EMOTIONAL ISSUES WAS INVOLVED.

4. AMBASSADOR TOLD PHILIPPI THAT EMBASSY HAD BEEN PLEASED TO LEARN HE HAD AGREED TO HANDLE MATTER. AT LEAST TWICE
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PREVIOUSLY, JUST WHEN HOLY CROSS NEGOTIATORS HAD FELT THEY

WERE MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT, SOURCES IN GOVERNMENT SEEMED TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN UNDOING ARRANGEMENTS ORALLY CONCLUDED, SO THAT SITUATION KEPT FALLING BACK INTO DEADLOCK. WE WERE HOPEFUL THAT WITH PHILIPPI'S INTERCESSION, THIS COULD BE AVOIDED AND A SOLUTION PROMPTLY ACHIEVED. PHILIPPI RESPONDED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED EXACTLY THE SAME COMPLAINT FROM THE GOVERNMENT SIDE.

5. PHILIPPI SAID HE HAD NO BRIEF TO NEGOTIATE ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL MATTER, BUT THAT HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF ENGAGED IN A "MEDIATION" EFFORT. HE THOUGHT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM LAY NOT IN A DISPUTE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND HOLY CROSS, BUT IN A CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION AT ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL AND HOLY CROSS. AS HE SAW IT, THE PARENTS WERE THE ONES WHO WERE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND GENERAL CONDUCT OF HOLY CROSS TEACHERS.

6. PHILIPPI SAID IT WAS GOING TO TAKE TIME TO SORT OUT FACTORS INVOLVED AND TO COOL EMOTIONS TO POINT WHERE SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT COULD BE CONCLUDED. HE VOLUNTEERED REQUEST THAT USG BE PATIENT AND NOT PRESS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION. HE FELT ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL PROBLEM SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO REACH ITS PRESENT PROPORTIONS, AND SAID HE INTENDED TO DO HIS BEST TO SEE THAT MATTERS WERE RECTIFIED ON A BASIS SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES.

7. COMMENT: IN LIGHT PHILIPPI'S APPROACH, IT IS CLEARLY UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT ANY SOLUTION OF ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL PROBLEM BY THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW CHILEAN SCHOOL YEAR, NEXT WEEK. WE APPRECIATE HOLY CROSS UNHAPPINESS RE DELAY, BUT SEE NO ALTERNATIVE TO GIVING PHILIPPI ADEQUATE TIME TO PURSUE HIS EFFORTS. INTERESTING THAT PHILIPPI SEES PARENTS AS MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK, AS IN PART INDICATED PARA 4 SANTIAGO 986. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN HOW REAL OR DEEP SEATED POSITION OF PARENTS ASSOCIATION MAY BE, OR WHETHER IT IS INFLUENCED BY POSITION OF EDUCATION MINISTER. THIS IS AN AREA IN WHICH WE CANNOT EASILY OPERATE. IMPORTANT POINT, AS PHILIPPI NOTED, IS TO AVOID ANY PRESSURE TACTICS ON PART OF ANY US OFFICIAL AGENCY AT THIS STAGE, SINCE THIS WOULD MERELY INTENSIFY EMOTIONALISM AND SET BACK POSSIBILITIES FOR A REASONABLE

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ARRANGEMENT.

8. TO PRESERVE PHILIPPI'S CONFIDENCE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IN CONVERSATIONS WITH HOLY CROSS CONGREGATION LEADERS, DETAILS OF THIS CONVERSATION NOT BE DIVULGED. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH SIMPLY TO STATE THAT WITH FONMIN'S KNOWLEDGE AMBASSADOR HAS INFORMALLY URGED PHILIPPI TO PROCEED AS PROMPTLY AND FAIRLY AS POSSIBLE.

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